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Preliminary memorandum to field leaders on granting  
of furlough leave

The recently enacted law "To maintain the credit of the United States," amends in some particulars and repeals in others the previous legislation on "Economy." Commencing with April 1st it repeals altogether the provisions relating to legislative furlough, and the permanent legislation granting 15 days annual leave during a leave year, which was suspended because of the furlough plan, becomes effective on April 1st. Therefore, no further furlough leave will accumulate after March 31. Annual leave at the rate of 1-1/4 days per month will hereafter constitute the allowable leave, except in cases of sickness.

This change has raised a number of questions with regard to salary payments and the administration of leave for the remainder of the present fiscal year. Some of the questions on which the Comptroller General has already rendered decision are given in brief below, as they concern all employees who were subject to legislative furlough for the period July 1, 1932, to March 31, 1933. Adjustments in salaries where necessary to conform with these decisions will be made, so far as practicable, on the pay rolls for March.

1. An employee who through March 31 has had deduction from his salary for 18 working days (at the rate of 1-1/4 day's pay for each working day), but who has taken, for example, only 11 days of furlough leave to March 31, is entitled to take the remaining 7 days during the period April 1 to June 30, 1933. It may not be taken after June 30. Eighteen as the base is arrived at by reason of the fact that when the furlough plan went into effect on July 1, 1932, the Comptroller General ruled that there must be a minimum deduction for 2 working days per month until deduction had been made for 24 working days (which on the basis of 1-1/4 day's pay for each day's absence would amount to the 30 days reduction in salary required by law). The period July 1 to March 31 is 9 months, and at the rate of 2 days per month, the minimum furlough to which any employee on full-time was subject amounted to 18 days.

2. If an employee had deduction from his salary for the entire 24 working days up to March 31, but has actually taken only 22 days, 5 hours, for example, in furlough leave, he is entitled to a refund for 1 day, 2 hours unused furlough leave. This refund will be at the rate of 1-1/4 day's pay for each day or fractional part thereof, of unused leave. If an employee has had deduction from his salary for 19 working days and has taken only 15 days, 3 hours leave, he has a balance of 2 days, 4 hours (18 days less 15 days, 3 hours), of furlough leave that may be taken sometime during the remainder of the fiscal year and there will also be made to him a refund for 1 working day (the number of days over 18 for which deduction had been made and leave not taken). No refund will be made to any employee who has had deduction from his salary through March 31 for only 18 days and has taken less than 18 working days' furlough leave--he is simply allowed to have the remaining days in leave during the present fiscal year.

3. If an employee has had deduction for 24 working days from his salary and has also had 24 working days furlough leave, he is not entitled to any refund.

In other words, for furlough leave paid for and taken no refund may be made.

The balance of unused furlough leave to which an employee may be entitled in the present fiscal year after March 31, in accordance with Paragraph 1 above, is in addition to annual leave which will accrue to him at the rate of 1-1/4 days per month effective April 1. Whether the leave year will be the calendar year, as heretofore in annual leave, or the fiscal year has not been decided as yet.

As stated above, salary adjustments will be made on the March pay rolls, so far as practicable, and it is most important that all outstanding applications for furlough leave up to and including March 31 be submitted promptly. Any periods of leave taken during the last few days of this month which will make the total for the nine-month period over 18 days may make a difference in the salary payment. Especial care should be observed when sending the end-of-month telegram for March services to see that there is reported all furlough leave taken and not reported on Bi-357.

Further decisions from the Comptroller General are expected soon on leave, salary deductions, etc., and a general memorandum will be issued as soon as possible covering all these questions and superseding previous memoranda which are in conflict with the new law.

As most of the field employees have doubtless learned through the newspapers, by the "Act to maintain the credit of the United States" the President is authorized to reduce salaries of Government employees (with some specific exceptions) by a percentage of not to exceed 15 per cent. This plan is to be substituted for the 8-1/3 per cent deduction by legislative furlough which is repealed as of March 31. The amount of deduction from the basic pay as of April 1 is to be determined by the President from investigation of the present cost of living as compared with that for the six-months' period ending June 30, 1928. What the amount of deduction will be has not been announced by the President, but field leaders will be advised regarding the operation of the new legislation as soon as information is available.

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